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The town council of Prince Ontario after consideration and deliberation referencing a report and recommendation from their Municipal Heritage Committee during the regular council meeting of March 13 2018 passed a motion to proceed with an Intent to Designate as a Municipal Heritage Site a property in the municipality.

Legal description of the property: Prince PT SEC 32 SW 1/4 RP 1R11974 PART 1

Physical Description: 0.43 Acres, 114.9 ft. frontage

ONTARIO HERITAGE TRUST

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

July 1, 2018

**To: Township of Prince Council – Municipal Heritage Committee**

**RECEIVED**

**Re: Ontario Heritage Site Designation – St. Aloysius Cemetery (Gros Cap, Ontario)**

**From: Gros Cap Friends of the St. Aloysius Cemetery**

**Date: March 2018-03-13**

**Background Information**

We are a group of interested residents and former residents of Gros Cap who are seeking an Ontario Heritage Site Designation for the St. Aloysius Cemetery, located in Gros Cap, Ontario, on Pinder Drive in Prince Township. The St. Aloysius Catholic Church started as a Jesuit mission for families in this area, and it served residents up until its closure several years ago. Our records indicate that many of the gravesites belong to the Anishnaabe peoples. Several grave sites belong to non-First Nations people and individuals of Metis ancestry. Some of the earliest gravesites date back to the late 1890s, and it is assumed that many sites that are not known or registered may date back even further.

As a group of interested individuals, we recognize that an Ontario Heritage designation would preserve this culturally and historically significant property for generations to come. Although St. Aloysius Catholic Church is no longer in operation the fenced in cemetery property is still present and visible. Upkeep and maintenance of the property has been taken over by the generous volunteer efforts of a small group of local residents who want the property to look aesthetically appropriate and respectful to those who are buried there.

**Historical Context**

The Bluffs of Gros Cap are rich in oral history and traditions that date back thousands of years. The Ojibwe people settled along those rugged shores to harvest the abundant Whitefish and Lake

Trout stocks, to hunt the plentiful wild game found in its dense forests, and to harvest maple sap during the spring thaw of each year. As early as 300BC a major village was located here and there is evidence of two archaeological sites located in this general vicinity. In those early years, Gros Cap was primarily a seasonally occupied site.

In 1660 a major battle occurred at Iroquois Point just across from Gros Cap on the present-day American side of the border. It was between the Ojibwe people located at Gros Cap and their traditional enemies the Iroquois. The Ojibwe were victorious in this famous battle, and utilized the element of surprise in their attack.

Later, the region came under the influence of the voyageurs. Records dating back to 1744 show a voyageur presence here on the shores of Gros Cap. The voyageurs paddled freighter canoes for the North West Company out of Montreal. They used Gros Cap as a final resting site before beginning their traverse across mighty Lake Superior en route to the rendezvous site of Fort William at the head of Lake Superior. Often times smaller birch canoes were exchanged for much larger sea faring vessels that could handle the rough water of the big lake.

Gros Cap continued to grow and develop as a fishing village, and with European colonization, many non-native families settled there and called Gros Cap home.

Today, Gros Cap is a wonderful and diverse bedroom community for Sault Ste. Marie. The residents are comprised of First Nations, Metis, and non-First Nations people living together on this beautiful landscape that is part of the rugged Canadian Shield terrain. It is a destination for hikers, mountain bikers, water sport enthusiasts, adventurers, and folks who just want to get back to the wild side of nature. Gros Cap is also the starting point of the Lake Superior Water Trail, which is a vital component of the continent-wide Trans Canada Trail. Docks, and an official entry point to the Water Trail exist at the government dock and marina just a short stretch down the highway from the cemetery site.

### **Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest**

The St. Aloysius cemetery preserved as an Ontario Heritage Site will only complement and enhance the story of Gros Cap and ensure that these rich oral and written histories are not lost with the passage of time. The Ontario Heritage designation of this cemetery will allow this property to become an educational tool for Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma students and their teachers. Understanding, and knowing our past is vital for any community to be able to move forward in a responsible and sustainable manner. In order to know where we are going, we must understand where we came from. The buried residents in this cemetery have Canadian stories to tell, and we must preserve this site so that these stories are not lost. It is the sentiment of this “concerned residents” group that the individuals buried in this cemetery deserve to be honoured for their contributions to our region’s history. It is our duty and responsibility to care for and preserve the historical significance of this property for generations to come.

It is interesting to note that this cemetery property sits on a high ledge overlooking mighty Whitefish Bay and Lake Superior. Many of the remains contained within this cemetery are individuals who made their livelihood working the Big Lake as commercial fishermen. It is only

fitting that they are able to watch over and care for the world's largest body of fresh water. They were and continue to be "The Stewards of the Lake".

For these reasons, we are appealing to the Township of Prince Council – Municipal Heritage Committee to grant a heritage designation for this small but historic site.

#### Direction on the Right to Object

The Prince newsletter will be the venue to advertise the Notice of Intention to Designate and when published will set the date for the start of the 30-day period to object. Generally, the newsletter goes out the last week of the month to cover the following month. It is a monthly periodical. It should be anticipated the next newsletter, the one that will include the Notice of Intention to Designate will be published during the last week of March 2018.

If there are no objections nothing further need be done on your part. This concludes the requirements to date for the Ontario Heritage Act.

If you require further information or assistance with an objection please contact either;

Chair, Municipal Heritage Committee

Margaret Christenson

ron.christenson@vianet.ca

or

Prince Twp., CAO clerk/treasurer

Peggy Greco

pgreco@twp.prince.on.ca

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